1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

take anything else with him, he took off his cloak and filled it with straw. As he hurried away in his rush and fright the straw bit by bit fell on the road and became stars. When he got to his house his robe was empty and behind him followed the monks. Since then we call these stars the priest's straw.

Rain. When summer has come to an end and fall is there we pick our grapes and harvest our maize and are waiting for God to send rain so that we can sow our wheat. The first rains start in mid-October. . . . They start either with a slow modest rain or sometimes with a strong one. The strong rain starts abruptly and all hell lets loose. The sky meets with the earth. Lightning, thunder, wind, hell. We all run with our hoes to hold the water back from entering our homes; others run to pull their animals out of ravines so that the water does not carry them away. Others gather the things that have remained outside, and others shelter themselves in their homes and gaze at the storm from their windows. When the weather turns good again it is the joy of God. Then we get ready our agricultural equipment for the field; it is time to sow. Rain is our life. Without it nothing grows; we are lost. But the rain can also do harm. When it rains suddenly the rivers come down with a rush carrying things and destroying our fields. It carries many rocks and stones onto the plain; when it rains and blows, it's hell. It throws down the wheat and it does a lot of damage. A good rain is a slow one. . . .

But nature is more than a collection of stars or plants or animals. It represents the forces against which man must contend as he seeks to wrest his living from the soil; nature brings disasters to which man must adjust even though he does not completely reconcile himself to his misfortune.

One type of catastrophe that visits Greece at frequent intervals is the earthquake, which comes usually in the late spring and summer. Wherever a person travels in Central Greece, Thessaly, or the Peloponnesos, he hears of the damage done by tremors. There is today an Old Corinth and a New Corinth, the latter being built after the old city was destroyed in 1858. New Corinth was once more destroyed in 1928 and rebuilt. In one village people still talk with sadness of a quake which occurred in 1875, killing forty-seven women and children inside the church. One of the most damaging earthquakes of recent memory was the August 1953 series of tremors in the Ionian Islands which destroyed so much of Cephalonia, Zante, and Ithaca. In April and May of 1954, more than thirty persons were killed in the quakes of Thessaly, three hundred injured, and thirty-two thousand made homeless.

Nature shows its unkindness in other ways. Sudden hailstorms, drought, and insect pests take their annual toll in many parts of Greece. While on a trip with the inspector of agriculture from Larissa, Thessaly, through some fields recently damaged by a storm, I asked him what the peasants thought of such a devastating rain. He said that they did not feel any enmity against the elements but do say in all seriousness to them "na se pare ho diavolos!" (may the devil take you!)

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

The Mountains

133 [311] The legend of the rainbow in the rock does not err in speaking of Greece as a rock. Only one fourth of her area is currently or potentially of any agricultural use and lies mostly in valleys or plains near the coast, at the foot of mountainous slopes. The remaining three fourths of the land consists largely of precipitous mountains, ranging up to a height in Mount Olympus of about 9600 feet.[11] "Beautiful," says the tourist. "Unproductive," says the economic planner.

The Pindus range, reaching its way south as an extension of the Dinaric Alps from Yugoslavia, is most marked in Epirus but nevertheless extends on into Central Greece. A spine of mountains comprises the central part of the Peloponnesos; even Athens is surrounded by gentle Parnes, Hymettus, and Pentele. In Northern Greece the Rhodope Massive cuts through part of Macedonia and Thrace, while Mount Olympus rises majestically out of the Thessalian plain. This means that the rugged topography is not confined to one part of Greece but that peaks can be seen from almost any place on the mainland. Many islands, including Euboea and Crete, have their heights around which legends as well as clouds have gathered.

[137] Since there are no forests on many of the mountains, the landscape has an almost naked look when seen for the first time. But a longer stay in Greece accustoms one to the browns and grays and lavenders in place of the greens often associated with tree-clad mountains. Frequently at dusk the mountains turn to a deep rose and purple that seems magically unreal.

[132] Where there are mountains there should be water to irrigate the fields below or turn the turbines of power projects. Heavy rains and snows do fall on the summits, but since Greece is only 171 miles across at its widest part (Epirus-Thessaly), and since the mountain divide cleaves the center, there is not much space in which rivers can find a gradual slope to the sea. They thus are short and swift, with a torrential character that poses great problems of flood, silt, erosion, and river control.

134 A village priest in Epirus described the erosion of soil by saying, half-seriously, that his fields grew rocks. When asked how this could be, he replied, "I went out and plowed my field, plowing around two rocks that stood only slightly above the ground. I put in my seed; the rains came. After the first rain I noticed that the rocks had grown farther above the soil; after the second rain they had grown even more. So I knew that my fields grew rocks rather than grain."

137 185 [311] [293] [175] Where there are mountains there should be forests. But before the war Greek forests covered only about 19 percent of the total area of the country. Once they were larger in extent. Constantine Nevros, in an article in *Soil Conservation*, holds the goat primarily responsible for the destruc-

1:Sanders Z-5/4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

tion of the forests, but points out that even in classical times portions of Greek forests were felled to provide lumber for the construction of Athenian triremes.[12] He dates the beginning of the serious destruction of Greek forests during the Roman invasion of Macedonia, when the Greeks lost their fields in the fertile plains and took refuge in the mountains where they were forced to become stock breeders. Other writers fix the most serious destruction at the time of the Greek war of independence, beginning in 1821, when large tracts of forest were burned. This form of devastation has continued ever since, either to clear land for cultivation or to encourage the growth of young palatable shoots which are attractive to stock. An example of what warfare can do is the cutting down of the trees on Mount Parnes, near Athens, and other places during World War II by the Germans pursuing guerrillas and by Athenians in need of fuel.

The remaining land area of Greece which is not arable and not in forest, certainly over 50 percent, is either in scrub oak or is open rocky range, a fact which makes sheep and goat raising an important branch of the economy.

Where there are mountains there should be useful minerals. Greece does have a variety of mineral deposits, including some iron ore of high content, iron pyrites, emery, copper, zinc, lead magnesite, chromite, and lignite. An American company is now exploiting a fairly large deposit of asbestos south of Kozane. There is no coal, but much more extensive use could be made of the "brown coal," or lignite, to reduce or eliminate the heavy import of coal. Even if the resources listed here, as well as others not touched upon, were fully utilized, Greece would still compare unfavorably with most other countries.

These barren, colorful mountains modify the climate.[13] We often tend to think of Greece as having a Mediterranean climate, mindful of its similarity to Florida or California. Actually, what is called a Mediterranean climate — a hot, dry, cloudless summer, frequent north winds, and a mild, rainy, cloudy winter — prevails over only a small portion of Greece, such as the eastern coast of the Peloponnesos, Central Greece and Euboea, Crete and the Aegean Islands. The map of rainfall shows this clearly. On the western side of the Peloponnesos there is a modified Mediterranean climate with much heavier rainfall. Much of Greece, however, has a modified Continental climate with cold winters and hot, usually dry, summers. These conditions of extreme alternations in Thessaly, Central and Eastern Macedonia, and Thrace favor the growing of cereals. The dry areas of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, with soils low in humus, are centers for the growing of the small-leaved Oriental or Turkish tobacco.

What is surprising is the prevalence of an Alpine climate, due to the high altitudes, throughout the Pindus area and the higher parts of the

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

[P.24]

102
132

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

Peloponnesos. Many villages[1] are snowbound for two, three, or even four months. The government has learned the necessity of helping these people stockpile their basic stores of food well in advance of the cold weather to avoid starvation or at least the malnutrition which would otherwise occur in these isolated villages.

Even around Athens, so very near the sea, the mountains take on an Alpine effect. On a January day in 1953, when early jonquils were blooming in the gardens around the villas, a thirty-minute drive took us to the top of Mount Parnes where people were skiing in two feet of snow, which lasted from three to four weeks.

In addition to the climatic role they play, the mountains become places of refuge when invaders overrun the country. Here the revolutionaries against the Turk began to flex their muscles prior to the beginning of the revolution in 1821. The dwellers of the cities and the monks in the monasteries may have kept Greek culture, in the sense of civilization, alive, but the villagers kept the spirit of independence alive. Over and over again those who really know Greece would say, "you have not seen our country until you leave the main highways and go up into the mountains to talk with the hardy peasants there." This tradition of the mountains is a conditioning influence in Greek thought and life along with the tradition of the sea.

What, one wonders, do the peasants think of the rough terrain about them? Do they personify any of the peaks or make their summits the dwelling place of gods, as did the Greeks of old? The old Greek pantheon, it seems, has been liquidated by the Christian God and the collection of saints revered by the Eastern Orthodox Church. "Thou hast conquered, Galilean," Swinburne's classic pagan wept. One does find on most peaks a monastery to St. Elijah, a whitewashed building reflecting the slanting sun in early morning or late afternoon. Students of these matters seem to agree that Elijah (Elias), who disappeared in a chariot of flame, may have superseded Helios and his fiery steeds.[14] The top of the mountain from ancient times has been the place to worship the sun.

Particular mountains, however, do have their own local traditions. One of the peaks of Panaitolikon in Central Greece is called the Mountain of the Old Woman, as the following legend explains.

> Once upon a time an old woman had finished pasturing her sheep below for the winter and had moved them up into the mountains for summer grazing. The month of March was almost ended, so the woman said: "March, you can go away; I don't need you any more for I have had a good winter below and will have a good summer here." But March in its anger borrowed one day from February, giving him thirty-one days. On that day there was a heavy storm. The old woman froze and turned into marble and there she now stands. That's why they call those heights the Mountain of the Old Woman.

[1] [Throughout the Pindus area and the higher parts of the Peloponnesos - ANALYST]

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

The Plains

Peasants nowadays live in the plains more willingly than they do in the mountains. Good level land has a scarcity value. The most thorough study of this has been made by A. G. Ogilvie, who prepared a map of population density in Greece for the *Geographical Journal* of May–June 1945. He has identified fifty-nine districts which he regards as plains. These usually contain the regional and local capitals and are widely scattered among and around mountains, including in most cases the slopes facing them. They take up about 30 percent of the mainland, but contain about 52 percent of the nonurban population. Thus, one half of the rural population lives upon plains comprising less than one third of the mainland; but this also means that the remaining one half of the rural population lives in a completely mountainous environment.

In Greece the largest plain — that of Trikkala-Karditsa in Thessaly — is less than five hundred square miles in size, not much larger than many American counties. The roll call of the plains, which are alluvial, would list the major provincial towns, whose location is in part an answer to the need for marketing and transportation services of the villagers located in the surrounding fertile agricultural areas. Whether I was traveling in the Peloponnesos, in Epirus, or elsewhere, it was always a stirring sight to climb some range and find spread out on the other side a fruitful valley, along a river or in some old lake basin whose water drained off long ago.

When Greeks think of the plains, however, they think of the kind around Larissa, the chief city of Thessaly, which has rapidly become the center of mechanized agriculture, or they think of the plain of Thessalonike in Macedonia. These are the most important breadbaskets of Greece. Familiarity with these plains means also familiarity with the sun of Greece, which beats down mercilessly in the summertime. Here, a clump of trees or even a single tree is an oasis of shade for a rest after hours of working the sun-baked fields. Where there is not even one tree, the peasants rig up tentlike shelters for use at noonday or take refuge beneath a battered umbrella. During the agricultural season the plains literally teem with people — seldom are they ever out of sight or sound; but they do become more tired and listless as the day wears on. The peasant men in straw hats become tanned to the color of dark leather, as do many of the women in spite of their free-flowing headkerchiefs. The sun, nevertheless, works wonders with the crops, ripening the grain and bringing sweetness to the magnificent fruits of Greece.

If the plains make one conscious of the sun, they make one even more conscious of water — so much so that a tepid drink from a donkey-borne cask has a refreshing tang to it. On the plains there is usually too much

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

Variations of this two-story, sloping-roof house occur in all the mountain areas of Greece, which includes most of Epirus, western Macedonia, much of Central Greece, and the Peloponnesos. There is much snow in this region, and the sloping roof keeps it from accumulating on the housetops. The one-story, sloping-roof house can be found in Attica around Athens as well as on the plains of Thessaly, Macedonia, and Thrace. This house usually has a stone foundation of twenty inches or less on which walls of sun-dried, home-made mud brick are built. The roof is covered with tiles:

> In their original and simplest form, these houses consist of one rectangular room, including under one roof the family, their cattle and corn. . . .
>
> The most ancient and the most closely related to the original form of Greek house is the simple narrow-front house, belonging to the type known as "megaron." It has the entrance on one of its narrow sides, having usually in front of it a "prostoon," or wide portico. . . .
>
> The wide-front house, however, is found more frequently in the Greek countryside. This house has its entrance and its "prostoon" on the long side of the rectangular plan.[18]

In many parts of Greece the one-room house has gone through a development which gives a separate space for the family, the stabling of the cattle, and the storage of the cereals. A final development is the separation of the stables from the house proper, leaving two rooms in addition to the granary often located between them. Where these two rooms have been provided, one is kept as a guest room, one as a storage place. In the winter the family moves into one room heated by the hearth or small stove on which the meals are prepared. The hearth, which can still be seen today in the center of some village homes, was moved in course of time to one of the walls — usually the middle wall separating the rooms of the two-room house — or to one of the inner corners of the room where a chimney was built.

These village homes, though simple in structure, call for considerable investment of time, money, and thought on the part of the family building a new house. Just what is involved is shown in the following conversation with a peasant woman, whose remarks hold generally true for all of the Greek mainland. Her husband had invited us to his house but had to leave for a short while to take care of his sheep. The woman, bright-eyed and wearing a scarf over her braided hair, moved her head quickly as she talked.

This home had one room, with wooden floors. Unlike some of their fellow villagers, this couple had wooden beds and did not have to make use of sleeping platforms, ordinarily found at one end of the room. There was a storeroom underneath the main room. To enter, one came directly into the yard from the street, then into the house after passing under the portico.

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

and rain. After the winter rains, the women keep watering the tiny plants and fertilize them regularly. The chemical fertilizer which is provided by the Agricultural Bank requires careful handling. Women explain that too much fertilizer will burn the tender plants, and they take pride in their success in applying just the right amount. Conversely, they ridicule any unfortunate woman who is so unskillful as to have burned her plants. As the tobacco plants grow and the weather gets warmer, occasional rains make worms and snails a hazard in the seed bed. In March and April, at dusk, women are seen stooping at the seed beds collecting and killing these parasites.

The winter of 1955–1956 was an unusually cold and long one, and Vasilika still had some snow in March. Many households had to plant tobacco three or four times in the course of the winter and spring, and several households ran out of seed. The abnormal weather with flooding rains in March and no rain for much of April delayed transplanting. Ordinarily, the tobacco plants are about four inches high in early April, and can be transplanted then. By that time, the fields are usually sufficiently well drained and yet still have enough moisture for the tobacco to "catch" as the villagers put it. In the spring of 1956, the fields were too dry by the time the tobacco was ready for transplanting. Some households resorted to carrying water from the wells, a gallon can at a time, making a hole with a small steel hook, pouring a small amount of water into the hole, and then placing the young tobacco plant into it. Everyone was thoroughly disgusted with the back-breaking and tedious labor, not normally connected with the tobacco crop, and men and women alike (both work at transplanting) were vociferous in their complaints. Tobacco, here, needs no irrigation. Therefore, although some of the farmers were willing to put their pumps into operation to irrigate the tobacco fields during this extraordinarily dry season, most of the tobacco fields were too far from the irrigation wells to make that entirely feasible.

Usually in late June or early July, the outer leaves of the tobacco are ready to be picked. Both men and women work at plucking the three or four outer leaves of the plants, and then sit in family groups on the ground in the shade stringing the leaves in preparation for hanging them over the canes. This kind of work normally follows the hoeing of cotton and is especially welcome. As we would pass from one part of the village to another, at this time, we would hear exclamations of satisfaction and enjoyment as people explained what a relief it was to be able to work out of the hot sun, near their houses, and sitting down besides. The tobacco stringing is a job in which even very young children can help, and they sit with the adults piercing with holes the tobacco leaves through which their elders eventually pass the string. Throughout the summer, periods of cotton hoeing alternate with periods of tobacco cutting and stringing.

Once strung, the tobacco is hung up to dry on frames which are set up on poles out of doors. A tobacco growers' association has recently distributed canvas shelters to prevent the soaking of the leaves by unexpected summer rains. When no such canvas is available, the tobacco is taken inside the barns each

6: McNeill H-5 (1947, 1956) 1957
EH1 Greece EH1

crowd around for advice, loans, seed and the like, and begin to turn to their local village government for assistance in bringing further improvements to the community.

Let us now turn to specific cases, and see what has happened in six representative villages during the past ten years.

Villages of the Plains

LOFISCOS

Lofiscos is situated in the plain of Thessaly, about half a mile off the main trunk road between Larissa and Volos. This is a region of hot summers and cold winters, for Thessaly is landlocked, surrounded west, east and south by precipitous mountains, and exposed to cold northern winds coming down from the plateau of western Macedonia in winter. It is the best wheat land of Greece, and wheat is the major – indeed almost the sole – crop raised by the villagers of Lofiscos today.

As the visitor approaches the village over a wandering track, deeply rutted by trucks that traverse the soft earth during the muddy months of winter and spring, Lofiscos looks shabby and ill-kempt. Houses are scattered irregularly; little fresh paint is in evidence. The dominant structure near the center of the village is a half-ruined rectangular stone tower that looks like and in fact once was a small fortress.

Before 1881, the year in which Thessaly was annexed to Greece, this building was inhabited by a Turkish pasha, who owned the entire area which now belongs to the villagers of Lofiscos. The ground floor was his granary and stable; in the upper story the great man lived with his harem. Since 1881 the building has been abandoned and allowed to decay slowly. The scattered huts in which the villagers live also survive from Turkish times in almost every case. The inhabitants are the

/5 cont./

The nearest railroad station is 3 kilometers from the village. The area is rather flat, sloping gradually as we progress towards the North East. The whole valley where the village lies is surrounded by small rolling hills that form numerous deep gulleys. Due to the lack of vegetation on those hills erosion has been going on for years and very often the fields are flooded down into the valley. The unceasing wars in this area, starting with the Balkan wars and ending with the First World /6/ War, stripped the hills of all trees and shrubs that could protect the soil and prevent the floods. One finds numerous dry fountain springs at the foot of the hills which were built by the people who passed on long ago. With the disappearance of the vegetation on the hills the water disappeared too. There is a small brook that runs North East of the village which quenches the thirst of the village cattle and the numerous flocks of sheep, and serves as a bathing place for the water buffaloes.

The flat land forms an alluvial valley, which has been formed from the deposition of soil by the continuous erosion of the nearby hills. The average elevation from the sea level is 90 meters. In general the soils of the area are 40% sandy clay red soils and 60% clay pyritic. These soils are made up from the surrounding rock formations. In general the depth of the cultivated soil is not more than 25 centimeters and very compact. The sub-soil is sandy clay and does not conserve the moisture. The fertility of these soils is depleted due to continuous farming for many centuries of the organic material and nitrogen.

The climate is very dry and hot in the summer months with plenty of rain during the winter months and occasionally snow. The seasons of the year follow each other /7/ abruptly and not uniformly. This of course has harmful effects on the growth and germination of the plants and hinders the diversification of farming.

The railroad station close to the village enables the village to get to the big trading city of Salonica. This good location

496
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2:Edmonds T-3 (1926?) 1927 E13 Balkan Peoples
Greece EH1

To the Land of the Eagle

evening after one of the most delightful walks that could ever fall to one's lot.

Ginger-beer is a survival from the time of the British administration which ended more than sixty years ago. The Victorian habit of closing all windows at night—night air being considered poisonous—is another. At sunset all the windows at the Pension Suisse were religiously closed and shuttered, including those of my bedroom which, as the weather was quite warm, I promptly opened again, and kept open. A more satisfactory legacy from the British occupation is the game of cricket, which is popular to this day.

There are only two months in the year in which the weather is really hot, and only two of so-called winter. Bathing is possible from April to November. At the beginning of May I found the water quite warm, although the Corfiotes think it madness to venture in before July.

In the summer the inhabitants close their shops and places of business during the middle of the day. But at five in the afternoon the town wakes up again and the whole population turns out into the cafés, the squares, the streets, and the esplanade. Here the folk stroll about, or sit at tables under the trees drinking coffee or Greek brandy, until ten or eleven o'clock at night when they go home to supper. They are fond of dancing. In the dance season they dance for many nights in succession, and no dance breaks up until seven or eight in the morning. They have also a theatre to which a company from Athens or Rome occasionally comes. On these nights the play begins at what is